

Russia in Bible Prophecy

We must be careful not to draw conclusions about Scripture by watching world events unfold before our eyes. For example, some believers thought the final ten-king confederacy of the Beast had arrived when the European Union was founded with *six* nations in 1957, enlarging to *ten* member states in 1981. Imagine their disappointment when it grew to 27 member states! Rather, let Scripture interpret itself, and notice how the present-day *development* and *alignment* of nations around the world support its prophecies, like the rebirth of the modern state of Israel in 1948.

Although the words “Russia” or “Moscow” do not appear in the Bible, there is little doubt Russia and countries of the former Soviet Republic have a part to play in end-time events. The principal chapters of interest are Ezekiel **38 & 39**, which predict the movement of a Russian-led invasion of Israel with a *northern* coalition of largely militant Islamic nations. It will be a swift, pincer-like movement with nations also coming from the *south*. The ultimate prize in this fatal game of thrones is the tiny land of Israel. “Russia will be joined by five main allies: Turkey, Iran, Libya, Sudan, and the Islamic nations of the former Soviet Union. Increasingly, these nations are hotbeds of radical Islam and are either forming or consolidating their bonds with Russia and each other” (Hitchcock). In these chapters, the phrase “Thus saith the Lord GOD” occurs *seven* times, for the God of Israel is in absolute and perfect control of all world affairs.

Mark Hitchcock remarks, “*Incredibly, all the way back in 586BC, Ezekiel peered into the future and gave us an intelligence briefing for who will join Russia in their anti-Israel assault.*” It is likely the same conflict is described in less detail in Daniel 11.40-45 (see previous Bible Class notes).

The Stages of the Conflict – What?

- **Prophecy.** Ezekiel prophesies *against* “Gog”, the “enemy” of the LORD (38.2-3). The two chapters are *two* messages from God to Gog (38.3; 39.1). Ezekiel 38 *describes* the attack from the perspective of Gog – even his innermost thoughts and motivations (38.10-12). Ezekiel 39 *describes* the purpose of God in the attack (note the repetition of “I will”) – and graphically *details* Gog’s *defeat, death and destruction*.
- **Period.** The chapters describe an event to take place “after many days” and “in the latter years” of Israel (38.8, 16).
- **People.** Gog will be *reluctantly*, but *divinely* drawn, to bring his whole, well-equipped army against Israel (38.4). His allies will include *Persia, Ethiopia, Libya and Gomer* along with the armies of *Beth-togarmah* from the distant north, *and* many others (38.5-6).
- **Plan.** He will come against Israel after they have been re-gathered from many lands and are residing in peace (38.8). The attack will be swift and decisive, rolling down on Israel like a storm cloud (38.9). The attack will be wickedly pre-meditated, knowing Israel to be *unexpected and unprotected* (38.10-11).
- **Plunder.** Gog’s motivation will be financial, with vast amounts of plunder on offer (38.12).
- **Protest.** *Sheba, Dedan* and the merchants of *Tarshish* will offer a mild protest, even cynicism that such a feat could be accomplished (38.13).
- **Punishment.** Gog is not a divinely commissioned agent of judgment against Israel as were *Assyria* and *Babylon*, thus he will feel the full force of divine judgment for his actions (38.17-18). As Gog and his hordes reach the mountains of Israel, there will be a mighty earthquake (38.20). The armies will turn on each other (38.21) and be struck down by *disease* and *fire* from heaven (38.22; 39.6). There will be *shaking, slaughter, sickness and storms!*
- **Provision.** Such a huge massacre will provide a sacrificial feast for vultures and wild animals (39.4, 17-20). The divinely rescued people of Israel will collect all the instruments of war and use them as firewood (fuel) for *seven* years (39.9-10).
- **Purification.** A vast graveyard will be made for Gog and his hordes – the bodies taking *seven* months to bury in the *Valley of Hamon-gog* (39.11-12, 15).
- **Purpose.** In all this, Jehovah’s *greatness, holiness, power, and glory* will be displayed to the nations of the world and remind the people of Israel of the power of *their* God (38.16, 23; 39.21-22).

The Site of the Conflict – Where?

- The mountains of Israel are mentioned *three* times (38.8; 39.2, 4). These mountains form a spine through the centre of Israel from *Beersheba* in the south to the *Valley of Jezreel* in the north.
- Fruchtenbaum notes, “*Up to the Six Day War in 1967, all of the mountains of Israel, except for a small corridor of West Jerusalem, were entirely in the hands of the Jordanian Arabs. Only since 1967 have the mountains of Israel been in Israel, thus setting the stage for the fulfillment of this prophecy.*”

- As this invasion comes primarily from the north, the armies of Gog may traverse down the Jordan valley before turning west across the mountains towards Jerusalem – this is where they will meet their end (39.2, 4). If Daniel 11.40-45 is a parallel passage, the “king of the north” (i.e. Gog) is described as sweeping into the “glorious (promised) land”. Ignoring what was an initial alliance, Gog then moves through Palestine to conquer Egypt. With the purpose of “annihilating many” – the extermination of the Jewish race – he will make his way back to the “glorious land” and pitch the “tabernacles of his palace” (palatial tent) between the Mediterranean and Dead Seas in the vicinity of the ‘glorious holy mountain’ of Zion. It is at this point, God intervenes.
- It is very interesting to note that Israel is described as dwelling “in the midst of the land” (38.12) or “centre (naval) of the earth” (NET). As the navel is set in the centre of the human body, so is the land of Israel the navel of the earth. She is at the “centre of the nations with countries all around her” (Ezekiel 5.5, NET).

The States in the Conflict – Who?

- *Nine* different peoples appear to be involved in the coalition: [1] “Gog of the land of Magog”, [2] the prince of Rosh, [3] Meshech and [4] Tubal (RV, 38.2). His allies are: [5] Persia, [6] Ethiopia and [7] Libya as well as [8] Gomer and [9] Togarmah. Who are these peoples?

Nation	Description	References
Gog	Probably not a proper name, but a <i>title</i> (like Pharaoh) of the leader of the invasion. The word came to be used as a general title for an enemy of God’s people – and is thus found metaphorically in Revelation 20.8. He is the ruler of the land of Magog and prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. Gog may mean ‘high’ or ‘supreme’, indicating his elevated position and pride. The word Gog may also come from the Sumerian word <i>gug</i> , meaning ‘darkness’. Interestingly, the word ‘Caucasus’ (a mountain range that separates Russia from Georgia and Azerbaijan) means ‘Gog’s fort’.	Ezekiel 38.2 1 Chronicles 5.4
Magog	Magog was the second son of Japheth, and grandson of Noah. According to Josephus, Magog was the land of the ancient Scythians. They were <i>“ruthless northern nomadic tribes who inhabited a large swath of territory encompassing Central Asia and the southern steppes of modern Russia. Magog today includes five former Soviet republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. Afghanistan could also be part of this territory”</i> (Mark Hitchcock). It would also include territory north of the Black Sea, i.e. Ukraine .	Ezekiel 38.2 Genesis 10.2 1 Chronicles 1.5
Rosh	The word <i>rosh</i> is a very common Hebrew word and simply means ‘head, top, summit, or chief’. The AV therefore translates the word as “chief” prince. But the word could indicate a proper name <i>or</i> geographical region, hence the translation “the prince of Rosh” (JND, RV). Many Hebrew scholars (such as CF Keil) demand the ‘superior’ translation of <i>rosh</i> as a proper noun. This was also the conclusion of the translators of the Septuagint, which translation was made within three centuries of the writing of Ezekiel. “Rosh” was identified with Russia by Byzantine Christians in 438AD. Gesenius says, <i>“Rosh is undoubtedly the Russians, who are mentioned by the Byzantine writers... under the name Ros, dwelling to the north of Taurus [Turkey]”</i> . In addition, the invading coalition will come from ‘the distant north’. The nation furthest north in a direct line from Jerusalem is Russia (and Moscow!).	Ezekiel 38.2 Genesis 10.2
Meshech Tubal	Meshech and Tubal were also sons of Japheth (Genesis 10.2) and are often named together in Scripture. They were trading partners with ancient Tyre (Lebanon) specialising in slaves and copper. Based on references in Assyrian sources which recorded their various conflicts in the region, Daniel Block identifies them with kingdoms in the interior of Anatolia (modern-day Turkey).	Ezekiel 38.2 Genesis 10.2 Ezekiel 27.13
Persia	The ancient land of Persia became the modern nation of Iran in March 1935, and then the name was changed to the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979.	Ezekiel 38.5
Ethiopia	Translates the Hebrew word <i>Cush</i> . Cush was the eldest son of Ham. Secular history locates Cush directly south of ancient Egypt in modern-day Sudan . Hitchcock writes, <i>“Sudan was locked in a deadly struggle between the Islamic north and Christian south for decades, culminating with South Sudan announcing its independence in July 2011. Since then, Sudan has been split into two sovereign nations. Northern Sudan, known simply as “Sudan” or officially as “the Republic of the Sudan,” is a militant, radical Islamic nation that supported Iraq and its leader Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War. The Sudanese government invited Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri to</i>	Ezekiel 38.5 Genesis 2.13 Genesis 10.6-8

Nation	Description	References
	<i>Sudan and became a safe haven for jihadists. Osama bin Laden was sheltered there from 1991 to 1996.” In November 2020, Putin approved a draft agreement for the establishment of a Russian naval base on the Red Sea coast of Sudan.</i>	
Libya	Translates the Hebrew word <i>Put</i> , the third son of Ham. The ancient <i>Babylonian Chronicles</i> reveal that <i>Putu</i> was the distant land to the west of Egypt, which we know as Libya and could possibly include nations farther west, such as modern Algeria and Tunisia. Reports from 2021 confirm that regular Russian troops are stationed in Libya.	Ezekiel 38.5 Genesis 10.6
Gomer	The eldest son of Japheth. Whilst Gomer <i>could</i> refer to present-day Germany (the rabbinic view), the more likely connection is with Turkey where the Gomerites resided in Ezekiel’s day. Josephus also connected the Gomerites with the Galatians who inhabited present-day central Turkey.	Ezekiel 38.6 Genesis 10.2
Togarmah	The third son of Gomer. Ancient Beth-togarmah was called <i>Til-garamu</i> by the Assyrians and <i>Tegarma</i> by the Hittites. Both the Assyrians and Hittites located Beth-togarmah in what is modern-day Turkey , along with Meshech, Tubal, and Gomer. Though Turkey has long been a member of NATO, its negotiations to become a member of the EU have been ongoing since 2005. It is very unlikely Turkey will ever be admitted, which may strengthen their already close ties with Russia. The population of Turkey is over 99% Muslim. The “house of Togarmah” will come out of the “north quarters” (uttermost parts of the north). Again, Turkey is a nation directly north of Jerusalem.	Ezekiel 38.6 Genesis 10.3

A further *three* peoples are mentioned in 38.13. These appear to be moderate dissenters to the military action, possibly lodging a formal protest with the UN. They appear to question the action of these nations, rather than intervene on behalf of Israel. “**Sheba**” and “**Dedan**” are easily identified as nations on the Arabian Peninsula such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates. Most of these nations are under moderate Sunni Arab regimes who oppose the more militant strains of Islam. “**Tarshish**” is more difficult to identify. Jim Allen says, “*Tarshish is a Phoenician word that had to do originally with the mining of metals... The word included the whole operation to produce the tin – the mining, smelting and refining of the metal. Spain, because of its importance in this trade in early times, was called ‘Tartassus’. Reference to ‘the merchants of Tarshish’ or ‘ships of Tarshish’ became synonymous with the idea of western power and influence outside the Mediterranean area.*” Tarshish was used in ancient times to denote the farthest lands of the west. The phrase “with all the young lions thereof” is a Hebrew idiom meaning peoples and nations that have come out of Tarshish. This is significant as Israel will have recently signed a peace treaty with the Western leader of a ten-nation confederacy, to guarantee its security and peace in the Middle East. Now, it seems, he and his associates do little to react to the invasion from the north. The word of a man in whom Israel trusted has not been kept – he has deceived them. But where men fail, God dramatically intervenes in power.



The **Setting** of the Conflict – *When?*

This is a *very* difficult question to answer, but there are *four* clues in the text which make it possible to pinpoint a likely time. Interestingly, Orthodox Jews view the “Wars of Gog” as a series of *three* future invasions that will be the next of Israel’s wars *before* the Messiah’s appearance.

- **Position.** The book of Ezekiel divides broadly into *three* parts (see table below). Ezekiel 37 – the “valley... full of (dry) bones” – initially predicts the physical *regathering* of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland (37.14, 21). This appears to happen *gradually* in unbelief as “the bones are gathered, and the corpses reconstructed *before* the bodies live again” (Mark Sweetnam). In totality, Ezekiel 37 describes Israel’s *regathering, regeneration* (37.1-14) and *reuniting* under one Davidic King (37.15-28) in a progressive and sequential order. The Millennium, with its restoration of the temple and its worship is introduced in Ezekiel 40. But the spiritual blessings of regeneration and the Kingdom cannot be realised apart from faith in the Messiah and the work of the Spirit (39.29). The intervening chapters of Ezekiel 38/39 are therefore well situated, explaining how God uses this warfare to bring His people from a merely *physical* (and political) regathering to *spiritual* revival (see 39.22). This will take place between Israel’s initial regathering in unbelief and the establishment of the Kingdom, i.e. the Tribulation. Israel will have *two* regatherings. The first return is happening today, as Jews are flooding back to *part* of the land in unbelief – this sets the scene for the Tribulation. The *second* return will be in faith to the Lord. Then *all* the land will be restored – this sets the scene for the Millennium.
- Ron Rhodes also notes, “*Before the northern coalition’s invasion of Israel, Israel must first be restored to the land. Ezekiel 38.8 makes reference to the holy land ‘whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel.’ Simply put, if Israel is not in the land, the land cannot be invaded.*”

1. Judgment Against Judah (Glory Departs) Ezekiel 1-24	
2. Judgment Against Gentile Nations Ezekiel 25-32	
3. Israel’s Future Blessing (Glory Returns) Ezekiel 33-48	
Regathering of the People Ezekiel 33-39 <i>33.21: Jerusalem has fallen (585BC)</i>	Restoration of Temple and Worship Ezekiel 40-48 <i>40.1-2: New vision given (573BC)</i>

- **Period.** Note the phrases “latter times” (38.8) and “last days” (38.16). In the NT, the phrase “last days” describes the church age. Those days began with the first advent of Christ and describe the entire period between His two comings. The phrase often has special reference to declension at the end of this age (cf. 2 Timothy 3.1). However, in the OT “last days” refers to the last days of Israel, i.e. seven years of Tribulation, culminating with the second advent of Christ and His kingdom on earth (cf. Deuteronomy 4.30; Isaiah 2.2; Jeremiah 30.24; Micah 4.1).
- Ezekiel 39 also gives *two* additional time markers. We are told that “seven months” will be required to *search* and *cleanse* the land by burying dead bodies (39.12). Additionally, Israel will plunder Gog’s weapons and burn them for firewood “seven years” (39.9-10). If these seven years refer to the Tribulation, then fuel for fire will likely be in short supply (cf. Revelation 8.7). The remnant of Israel will be gathered in the mountains of Bozrah, and probably very glad of ‘firewood’ (Micah 2.12).
- **Peace.** *Three* times we are told this invasion will occur when Israel is living “safely” (38.8, 11, 14). The word means to ‘live in security’ (calm assurance), with ‘freedom from anxiety or fear’. Israel will also be a “land filled with unwallled villages” (38.11). This is best taken as describing the unparalleled security Israel will enjoy during the first half of the Tribulation having signed a peace treaty with the Man of Sin (Daniel 9.27; 1 Thessalonians 5.3).
- Fruchtenbaum argues this means “*security due to confidence in their own strength, not the security due to a state of peace*”. In his view, this is a good description of Israel at the present time: “*Today Israel is secure, confident that her army can repel any invasion from the Arab states. Hence, Israel is dwelling securely.*” But it is unlikely these terms can adequately describe Israel today. David Jeremiah notes, “*This is clearly one condition that has not yet occurred. There has never been a time in Israel’s existence, ancient or modern, when it has not been concerned about defence. Israel has always been surrounded by enemies. Even today Israel is constantly threatened from all sides by extremely hostile neighbours many times its size. It has already fought three major wars in its brief modern history, and Israel’s close neighbour Iran is rabidly eager to annihilate it.*”

- **Prosperity.** At the time this invasion occurs, Israel will not only be physically restored to their land, but also prosperous and thriving (36.9-11; 38.12). Ezekiel mentions “cattle and goods” (38.12) as well as “silver and gold” (38.13) – these are general OT references for spoils of war. Being mindful of today’s world energy crisis, it may be significant that “massive gas reserves have been discovered in Israel in recent years, the most impressive being the Leviathan field, which contains around 20 trillion cubic feet of gas” (Mark Hitchcock). Furthermore, the Dead Sea contains 45 billion tons of sodium, chlorine, sulphur, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and bromide.

Probability. Given these clues (above), the most likely timing of the invasion is very early in the Tribulation. Such an attack would be a plausible militant Muslim response to the signing of a peace accord in Jerusalem. The beginning of the Tribulation commences with such a treaty as illustrated by the “white horse” of the first seal (Revelation 6.2). The rider is a *counterfeit* Christ offering a false dawn of peace which is shattered at the midpoint of the Tribulation. After the white horse is a “red” horse with the rider having power “to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword” (Revelation 6.4). This could be the warfare of Ezekiel 38/39.

Alternative Views

- *Already* fulfilled. The insurmountable problem with this proposition is there has never (historically) been a war with Israel which fulfils these prophecies. Some argue this premise because of the description of ‘primitive’ modes of warfare such as shields, bows, arrows and spears (39.9). There are two plausible solutions to this problem:
 - The catastrophic judgments of the Tribulation may have rendered modern military equipment useless, or the world may have made disarmament treaties.
 - Ezekiel spoke in language the people of his day could understand. Any talk of tanks or MIG-29 fighter jets would have been nonsensical to every hearer and reader alike!
- *After* the Rapture but *prior* to the Tribulation. This is the second most-likely scenario but contradicts the phrase “last days” which refers to the Tribulation and does not adequately satisfy Israel living “safely”. It would, however, allow for Israel to rebuild the Jewish temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. With Muslim forces destroyed, their resistance will be greatly minimised.
- At the *end* of the Tribulation (Armageddon). The best argument for this view is the similarity of language describing birds and beasts feeding on the huge numbers of fallen dead (cf. 39.17-20; Revelation 19.17-18). But Armageddon involves *all* the nations of the earth not merely a northern coalition (Joel 3.2; Zephaniah 3.8; Zechariah 12.3; 14.2). In addition, it is impossible to describe Israel as living “safely” during the Great Tribulation (last 3.5 years)!
- At the *end* of the Millennium. See Revelation 20.7-10. The use of the same names “Gog and Magog” has caused some to conflate the two campaigns, but they are separated by 1,000 years or more. The invasion in Ezekiel is immediately followed by the *Kingdom* (Ezekiel 40–48), whereas the attack prophesied in Revelation is immediately followed by the *eternal state*. In Revelation, John is likely using Gog and Magog as a shorthand metaphor for enemies of God and His people. This is a ‘Gog-like’ attack.

The Significance of the Conflict – Why?

- **Pride** of Gog. He will seek to *steal* land (38.8, 12), *seize* wealth (38.12-13) and *slaughter* the Jewish people (38.10, 16). The third most holy site in Islam, the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque, sits on the Jewish Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Any treaty which allows Israel to take permanent possession of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem would cause unparalleled rage amongst Muslims. Randall Price writes, “*Orthodox Jews in the Temple movement in Israel generally agree that the war of Gog and Magog is to be the next of Israel’s wars, and believe that it will be fought over possession of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.*”
- It is of interest that each of the nations that comes against Israel were once part of much larger ancient empires – the *Persian* (Iran), *Ottoman* (Turkey) and, more recently, *Soviet* republic (Russia). Perhaps there is an element of seeking to regain former glories, of which a strategic hold in the Middle East would be hugely beneficial.
- **Purpose** of God. The destruction of Gog and his hordes on the mountains of Israel will create a huge power vacuum which the Antichrist will be swift to fill. By the middle of the Tribulation, he will control the world *economically* and *politically*, perhaps even claiming credit for Gog’s defeat. Thus, this is another step in the sovereign plan of God for His people. In fact, the *complete* return of Israel will occur after the defeat of Gog and his confederates (39.25-29). God will have mercy upon the “*whole house*” of Israel, for all previous restorations were *partial*. Now, a *universal* and *final* restoration will take place in conjunction with the outpouring of the Spirit.
- **Power** [and Providence] of God. The phrase “Thus saith the Lord GOD” occurs *seven* times, for the God of Israel has foreseen and is in absolute and perfect control of all world affairs. But divine sovereignty, “*I will bring thee forth*” (38.4; 39.2), does not negate human responsibility, “*thou shalt think an evil thought*” (38.10).
- **Praise** of God. Note the three verbs of 38.23: “*Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.*” The word “magnify” means ‘to become great’, or ‘prove oneself great’. The destruction of Gog will be another proof added to the long list of evidence to declare

the greatness and glory of God. The word “sanctify” means to be ‘set apart’ in holiness, power and honour as the One true God – that all the world might come to “know” (realise) that He is Jehovah – the self-existent, unchanging, eternal God (39.6, 22-23).

OT prophecy concerns the *earth* and *nation of Israel*. These prophecies, and their fulfilment, are designed to have a practical impact on believers today. Whilst we are not waiting (passive) for the coming King – as Israel, we should be watching (active) for the coming Son, our Saviour. The rapture is our great hope. The realisation of this truth should:

- *Comfort*, knowing that God is in control (John 14.1; 1 Thessalonians 4.18).
- *Control*, our service as we allow the hope of the coming of Christ to govern our lives (1 Corinthians 15.58)
- *Cleanse* (Tit. 2.12-14; 1 John 3.2-3; 2 Pet. 3.11-14; Rom. 13.11-14). Any believer who gets up in the morning thinking Christ could come today will strive to please the Lord. It’s a fail-safe formula. Yet the opposite is also true. Failure to live expectantly makes us far more vulnerable to temptation and sin. Spurgeon once said, “*Take this for the guide of your whole life —act as if Jesus would come during the act in which you are engaged —and if you would not wish to be caught in that act by the Coming of the Lord, let it not be your act.*”

With wars and rumours of wars, hyper-inflation, spiralling living costs and economic turmoil around the world, “faith can almost hear his footfall on the threshold of the door”. Is your heart longing to be with Him evermore? Israel is God’s great sun dial, and the alignment of nations against her suggests the rising of the Sun of righteousness is not far away.

Addendum: The Sovereigns of the End Times

- In the strife between nations and kingdoms in the last days, Scripture speaks of *four* “kings” (leaders) that will ascend to power. They are from the north, south, east and west. Each of these directions takes its reference from the nation of Israel which is described in Ezekiel’s as “the midst of the land” (38.12) or ‘centre’ (lit. naval) of the world. Israel was placed in the centre of the world to be a light to the Gentiles (5.5). The ancient Rabbis said, “*As the navel is set in the centre of the human body, so is the land of Israel the navel of the world... situated in the centre of the world, and Jerusalem in the centre of the land of Israel, and the sanctuary in the centre of Jerusalem, and the holy place in the centre of the sanctuary, and the ark in the centre of the holy place...*”
- King of the **west**. Though not explicitly named as such, a final world empire will arise during the tribulation which will be Roman in character. As revealed in the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Daniel 2), the ‘feet and toes’ suggest this world empire will comprise a Western coalition of *ten* nations led by the Man of Sin (cf. Daniel 7.7, 24; Revelation 13.1; 17.12). In Daniel 7 they are pictured by *ten* horns on the fourth beast. Daniel later calls this leader a ‘little horn’ (Dan. 7.8) and “king of fierce countenance” (8.23; cf. 11.36).
- King of the **south**. Daniel’s final vision commences with the Persian period (11.2) and rise of Greece (11.3-4) before dealing largely with the conflict between various kings of the *north* (Syria and the Seleucid empire) and *south* (the Ptolemies of Egypt), i.e. two of the four divisions of the original Greek empire under Alexander. The prophecy proceeds to unfold the *near* future (11.2-35) before leaping to the *far* future of the tribulation end times. The “king of the south” is mentioned in Daniel 11.40. He appears to be allied with the “king of the north”, simultaneously invading Palestine. It is likely Daniel 11.40-45 describes the same conflict (in less detail) as that of Ezekiel 38/39.
- King of the **north** (Daniel 11.40). Throughout Daniel 11, the “king of the north” is the leader of the Seleucid empire which controlled vast swathes of territory north and east of Israel. The modern-day prophetic counterpart includes Iran and Russia – as confirmed in Ezekiel 38. Indeed, some of the peoples in Ezekiel 38 (such as Magog, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal) are those who originate, and have migrated northwards from, the old Seleucid Empire.
- Kings of the **east** (Revelation 16.12). The specific nations in the coalition from the east are not listed but will march on Israel from beyond the Euphrates at the close of the Tribulation for the final “battle of that great day of God Almighty”. This is the final assize of the Tribulation and will take place at Armageddon. These kings will likely be Asiatic and include China.

There is, of course, a *fifth King*. He is not from the north, south, east or west, but from *above*. The final worldwide gathering of the rulers of the world will be arranged by God as He brings His King of kings from heaven to crush the armies of men and establish the divine rule of righteousness on the earth.